



**Directors of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions:
1. Reverend John Baptiste Abraham Brouillet, 1874-1884**

Kevin Abing, 1994

J.B.A. Brouillet, the first director of the BCIM, was a native Canadian. He was born on December 11, 1813, and spent his childhood on his father's farm in the village of St. Jean-Baptiste de Rouville. It seems clear that Brouillet was called to the religious life at an early age. In 1826, when Brouillet was almost thirteen, he entered the minor seminary of Saint Hyacinthe. An exceptional student, Brouillet ranked at, or near, the top of his class in versification, philosophy, rhetoric, English and translating Latin and Greek. Such was his academic standing that, in addition to studying for the priesthood, he served as a professor in grammar classes in 1833-1834 and as a professor of literature in 1835-1836. Brouillet was ordained to the priesthood on August 27, 1837, in the Cathedral of Montreal.¹

After his ordination, Brouillet was assigned to teach at the College of Chambly. He taught there until September 24, 1842, when he was named pastor of St. Georges d'Henryville parish. Brouillet devoted much of his energy to establishing schools in his new parish. He left St. Georges in 1846 for his new assignment as pastor of l'Acadie parish, but his service there was brief. The summer of 1846 was a turning point in Brouillet's life. It was at that time that he met Augustin Blanchet, who had been recently named Bishop of Walla Walla (later Nesqually). Blanchet had been traveling in Canada, encouraging priests to take up missionary work in the Oregon Territory, which included the entire American Northwest. Brouillet attended a meeting and was immediately stirred by Blanchet's call. The young priest's enthusiasm, in turn, impressed Blanchet. The Bishop asked Brouillet what he would say if Blanchet asked him to give up his beloved parish. Brouillet responded, "I would say, me voici! [Here, I am!]. As the two shook hands, Brouillet told Blanchet, "Count on me; if my bishop gives me permission, you shall not leave alone." As Blanchet made preparations for the journey west, Brouillet returned to his pastoral duties at l'Acadie, waiting for word of his fate. By February 1847, Brouillet had not yet received permission to go, causing Blanchet to fear that he would have to depart without his eager disciple. Finally on March 8,

¹Sister Marian Josephine (Thomas), S.H.N., "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet: First Vicar General of the Diocese of Seattle," (Master's thesis, Seattle University, 1950), 2-6; Edward J. Kowrach, *Journal of a Catholic Bishop on the Oregon Trail: The Overland Crossing of the Rt. Rev. A.M.A. Blanchet, Bishop of Walla Walla, from Montreal to Oregon Territory, March 23, 1847 to January 23, 1851* (Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1978), 143; Clarence B. Bagley, ed., *Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon*, vol. 1 (Seattle, WA: Lowman & Hanford Company, 1932), part 2, 153.

Bishop John Charles Prince provided the necessary orders. Less than a week later, Blanchet appointed Father Brouillet vicar general for the Diocese of Walla Walla.²

Bishop Blanchet, his new vicar general and two other volunteers set out from Montreal on March 23, 1847. They traveled across New York and Pennsylvania by stage and railroad, then by boat down the Ohio River. The missionaries reached St. Louis on April 15 and remained there twelve days, gathering supplies for the trek across the plains. While in St. Louis, Blanchet's group was joined by four Oblate missionaries from France. Leaving St. Louis on April 27, the small company made their way across Missouri to Westport, one of the jumping off points to the West. They linked up with a wagon train and began the arduous journey along the Oregon Trail. Once the party reached Fort Hall on the Snake River, Bishop Blanchet decided that he and three others should proceed on horseback to Walla Walla and make arrangements for lodging and provisions. The rest of the group, led by Father Brouillet, would follow with the wagons. Blanchet arrived at Fort Walla Walla on September 5, 1847, while Brouillet and his contingent reached their destination on October 3.³

Shortly after his arrival, Brouillet became embroiled in one of the most famous controversies in the history of the Oregon Territory. Dr. Marcus Whitman had proselytized among the Cayuse Indians for over a decade, yet the tribe had become dissatisfied with him because Whitman had been actively helping white settlers move into Oregon Territory. Also many of the tribe died from various diseases, raising suspicions in the Indians' minds that Whitman was poisoning them. The tribe's disenchantment prompted Tautau, one of the tribal chiefs, to appeal to Blanchet to start a mission among the Cayuse. Convinced that the Catholics could succeed where Whitman had failed, Blanchet assigned Father Brouillet to establish St. Anne's Mission. In early November, Brouillet chose Tautau's village on the Umatilla River as the site for the mission and returned to Walla Walla on November 10. The next day, Blanchet sent a crew to repair the proposed mission. When the buildings were ready, Brouillet occupied the mission on November 27.⁴

On the evening of November 30, Brouillet arrived at a Cayuse camp near Dr. Whitman's mission to baptize infants and any interested adults. To his horror, he learned that Cayuse warriors had killed Dr. Whitman, his wife and nine others the day before. With the killers still milling about, Brouillet spent a sleepless night at the camp. The next morning, he hurried to the Whitman mission and found that the bodies had not yet been buried. Aided by one of the survivors, Brouillet completed the grisly task of washing and burying the victims in a common grave.⁵

²Thomas, "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet," 7, 9-14.

³Thomas, "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet," 15-17; Kowrach, *Journal of a Catholic Bishop*, 143-44; Wilfred P. Schoenberg, S.J., *A History of the Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest, 1743-1983* (Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1987), 102-106.

⁴Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *The Cayuse Indians: Imperial Tribesman of Old Oregon* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 100-108; Bagley, *Early Catholic Missions*, Part 2, 190; Thomas, "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet," 18-19; Schoenberg, *Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest*, 107.

⁵Bagley, *Early Catholic Missions*, Part 2, 192-96; Peter Rahill, *The Catholic Indian Missions and Grant's Peace Policy, 1870-1884* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), 55-56; Ruby and Brown, *The Cayuse Indians*, 114; Schoenberg, *Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest*, 110-14.

Brouillet knew that Henry Spalding, another Protestant missionary targeted by the Cayuses, would soon pass through the village. At great personal risk, Brouillet left the village and warned Spalding of the danger. Spalding escaped, narrowly avoiding capture. Soon thereafter, he wrote a letter to Blanchet thanking his "dear friend" for saving his life. But the next year, Spalding wrote several letters to the *Oregon American* charging that the Catholics were responsible for the massacre. Incensed at Spalding's ingratitude, Brouillet wrote a 107 page pamphlet refuting Spalding's accusations. The "murder of Dr. Whitman and his associates," Brouillet claimed, "was premeditated, matured and determined upon by the evil disposed Indians among the Cayuse nation, long before the arrival of the Bishop of Walla Walla and his missionaries." His spirited defense quieted the controversy for a time, but Protestant accusations hounded Brouillet for several years, as political and religious enemies periodically raised questions about his role in the matter.⁶

White settlers in Oregon were outraged by the Whitman massacre and soon mobilized a military force. Brouillet, in the meantime, returned to St. Anne's Mission. The Cayuse were angry with Brouillet because he had helped Spalding escape, but they did not retaliate. Nevertheless, the eruption of full-scale fighting between whites and Indians forced Brouillet to close the mission on February 20, 1848. Shortly after he left, the Indians burned St. Anne's to the ground.⁷

While he waited for the situation to become less chaotic, Brouillet worked with Bishop Blanchet at St. Peter's Mission at The Dalles. During that summer, news of the discovery of gold in California reached Oregon. The diocese was plagued with numerous debts, and so, Blanchet immediately sent Brouillet to California to raise much-needed funds.

Brouillet arrived in San Francisco in December 1848 and immediately began visiting the mining camps, seeking donations for the Oregon missions. The spiritual destitution of the population convinced the vicar general that his help was desperately needed in California. His first step was to build a church. He collected \$5,000 and erected a small frame church on Vallejo Street, the first Catholic house of worship in San Francisco. Brouillet celebrated the first Mass there on June 17, 1849. In addition, Brouillet successfully recruited Jesuit priests to minister to the ever-growing population and also encouraged Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur to establish Catholic schools in California. These activities delayed Brouillet's return to Oregon causing Bishop Blanchet to fear that he might lose Brouillet's services permanently. In several letters, Blanchet suggested that Brouillet wrap up his activities in California. And then on July 13, 1849, Blanchet insisted that Brouillet return. The following week, Blanchet reprimanded his vicar general for staying in San Francisco. Despite Blanchet's pleas, Brouillet continued his efforts in California until he reluctantly sailed for Oregon in December 1849. Brouillet's tardiness notwithstanding, Blanchet was very pleased with the results of the mission. Consequently, he again sent Brouillet to San Francisco the

⁶Rahill, *Catholic Indian Missions*, 55-56; Schoenberg, *Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest*, 115-17; Clifford Merrill Drury, ed., *The Diaries and Letters of Henry H. Spalding and Asa Bowen Smith relating to the Nez Perce Mission, 1838-1842* (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1958), 346; Kowrach, *Journal of a Catholic Bishop*, 144. Brouillet's pamphlet is reprinted in Bagley, *Early Catholic Missions*, Part 2, 155-238. Quote is on pages 156-57. For an example of Protestant antagonism toward the Catholics, see W.H. Gray, *A History of Oregon, 1792-1849, Drawn From Personal Observation and Authentic Information* (Portland, OR: Harris & Holman, 1870).

⁷Ruby and Brown, *The Cayuse Indians*, 115-127; Kowrach, *Journal of a Catholic Bishop*, 144; Thomas, "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet," 21-22.

following year to raise funds but with the proviso that he not occupy himself "with any foreign affairs."⁸

Brouillet returned to Oregon after a two-month stay in California. Thereafter, Brouillet immersed himself in his many ecclesiastical duties. In 1850, Bishop Blanchet was transferred to the newly-created Diocese of Nesqually, with its headquarters at Vancouver. Not surprisingly, he appointed Brouillet vicar general of Nesqually in November. In his new post, Brouillet actively sought donations and recruited missionaries to staff Indian missions and schools. He served as pastor of St. James Mission in November 1850, but he also inspected the other Indian missions in the diocese. Eventually the scope of his activities broadened to include white settlers. As Americans flooded into the Northwest, Brouillet recruited the necessary personnel to minister to their spiritual needs. And, when Bishop Blanchet embarked on fund-raising trips to Mexico in 1851 and to Europe in 1856, Brouillet assumed control of all diocesan administrative duties.⁹ Although these administrative burdens eventually ended, a new task absorbed increasing amounts of Brouillet's time.

Bishop Blanchet feared that the Church would have to relinquish the lands occupied by missions in his diocese. His concern arose from the increased number of white homesteaders, overlapping claims with the military and the unsettled state of the Indians. Thus he and Brouillet labored for years to secure a clear title to those mission lands. In 1859, Blanchet sent Brouillet on a trip to the East seeking financial support as well as missionary recruits. Brouillet also visited Washington, D.C., and successfully gained title to the land at Cowlitz Mission. Brouillet made another trip to Washington in 1862 to protect diocesan mission property.¹⁰

His 1862 trip marked another turning point for Brouillet. For on this trip, Brouillet became more politically involved in the cause of Catholic missions. Bishop Blanchet encouraged Brouillet to meet with the Secretary of the Interior and Indian Department officials to encourage the government to "adopt a system which will withdraw [Catholic missionaries] from the bigotry of the Protestant ministers and of the local administrations which are generally devoted to them."¹¹ Consequently, Brouillet sent a memorial to President Lincoln in October 1862. Foreshadowing Grant's Peace Policy, Brouillet requested Lincoln to instruct government superintendents and agents in Oregon and Washington to act in concert with religious missions. Brouillet also asked that Indian reservations served by the Catholic Church "be placed under the religious care of the Catholic

⁸Kowrach, *Journal of a Catholic Bishop*, 144-45; Thomas, "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet," 22-29; Gilbert J. Garraghan, S.J., *The Jesuits of the Middle United States*, 3 vols. (New York: America Press, 1938), 2: 395-403; Schoenberg, *Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest*, 124-25; Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, Vol. 4: *Upper California* (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1915), 614-616; Bryan J. Clinch, "The Jesuits in American California," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* 17 (1906), 54-58; John B. McGloin, S.J., "The California Catholic Church, 1840-1849: A Report on Religion," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* 60 (December 1949), f. 14, p. 220.

⁹Thomas, "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet," 29-48; Kowrach, *Journal of a Catholic Bishop*, 145.

¹⁰Kowrach, *Journal of a Catholic Bishop*, 145; Thomas, "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet," 37-38, 48-52, 58-59.

¹¹Blanchet to Brouillet, June 17, 1862, quoted in Thomas, "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet," 59.

Missions." Moreover, reservations with Indians taught by Protestant missions should be placed under their care.¹² The White House forwarded Brouillet's memorial to William Dole, Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Dole thought Brouillet demanded too much of the government. The government's Indian policy seemed "sufficiently liberal" to Dole because it protected all religious denominations in the control of their own missions. The Commissioner was "not willing to relinquish any of the powers of this office to regulate and control the affairs of the Indians through our regularly constituted Superintendents and Agents."¹³

Unsuccessful, but undaunted, Brouillet returned to Washington, D.C., in 1864 to handle the claim of St. James Mission. Again, Brouillet got caught up in "foreign affairs," and again, Bishop Blanchet urgently requested Brouillet to return home. Brouillet, however, did not go back to Washington Territory until the summer of 1867. For the next several years, Brouillet devoted his attention to the missions in the Walla Walla region. During this time, he helped establish the first government contract schools under religious control.¹⁴

Brouillet's career took another turn in 1872. In November, Francis and Augustin Blanchet again sent the vicar general to Washington, D.C., to settle land claims for the diocese. On this trip, however, Brouillet became involved in the defense of all Catholic Indian missions. President Grant launched his Peace Policy in 1870. In parceling out Indian agencies, the Indian Department snubbed the Catholics, who received only seven of an expected thirty-eight agencies. The Blanchets and Brouillet had lobbied the American Catholic hierarchy to name a Catholic agent in Washington since 1864. Their efforts did not bear fruit until March 17, 1873, when Archbishop Bayley appointed Charles Ewing Commissioner of Catholic Indian Missions.

The tasks entrusted to Ewing were considerably more than one man could handle. As a liaison between the government and the Catholic missionaries, Ewing was to support the churches and schools within the designated Catholic agencies, convince the government to turn over several Protestant agencies to the Catholics or, barring that, at least obtain permission allowing Catholic priests into Protestant agencies so that they could minister to thousands of Native American Catholics. Consequently, Ewing became increasingly dependent on Brouillet's many years of experience and boundless energy. Indeed, Brouillet is credited with establishing the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions. In late August and September of 1873, he approached Archbishop Bayley and obtained permission to organize a permanent Catholic office in Washington, D.C. Although Brouillet and Ewing were defending the interests of Catholic missions as early as January 1873, the BCIM was not formally organized until January 2, 1874.¹⁵

Heavily involved in BCIM work, Brouillet still tended to the Blanchets' interests. Indeed, the Blanchets fully expected Brouillet to return to his mission work once those matters were completed. Bishop Blanchet urged Brouillet to return to the West as early as February 1873. The request was repeated again in March. Ewing interceded on Brouillet's behalf. He convinced Archbishop Bayley to contact the Blanchets. Bayley asked them to allow Brouillet to remain in

¹²Memorial of J.B.A. Brouillet to Abraham Lincoln, Record Group 48, Selected Classes of Letters Received by the Indian Division of the Secretary of the Interior (M825), Roll 20, frame 1065.

¹³William P. Dole to Brouillet, October 31, 1862, Record Group 75, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent (M21), Roll 69, p. 282-83.

¹⁴Thomas, "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet,"70-81; Kowrach, *Journal of a Catholic Bishop*, 146; Rahill, *Catholic Indian Missions*, 82-83.

¹⁵Rahill, *Catholic Indian Missions*, 72-85, 100-101.

Washington, D.C., a little longer because Ewing and he were negotiating with the government for the Chippewa agency. Bishop Blanchet complained that his poor diocese could not pay Brouillet's expenses while he was in Washington. Moreover, there were too few priests in Washington Territory to oversee the Indians' needs adequately, but, in the end, he reluctantly agreed to let Brouillet stay.¹⁶

By January 1874, Bishop Blanchet was determined to have Brouillet return to the Northwest. The news distressed General Ewing, who relied so much on Brouillet. On January 22, he implored Blanchet to let Brouillet remain. Brouillet's "ability, his knowledge of Indian life and of the wants of the Indian Mission Church; and his zeal in the work that is before us," Ewing claimed, "makes his presence here absolutely necessary." Ewing added, "the severest blow that can be struck at our Indian Missions would be an order that would deprive this office of the services of Father Brouillet."¹⁷ Blanchet acknowledged Brouillet's value to Ewing, but responded that Brouillet was in "charge of an important and vast mission. On account of his prolonged absence, the souls confided to his care are suffering so that I have considered myself conscientiously obliged to recall him."¹⁸ Despite Blanchet's insistence, Brouillet remained in Washington, D.C. Finally, in August, Blanchet chided Brouillet for his delay, stating that the vicar general's reticence caused the bishop "some displeasure." Unwilling to cause further tension, Brouillet returned to his diocese by October. His work with the BCIM, however, was not yet finished. Bishop Blanchet soon had a change of heart; he had Brouillet secure a replacement and then notified him on December 23, 1874, that he could return to Washington, D.C.¹⁹

Brouillet immediately embarked on a campaign to promote Catholic missionary work. While still in Oregon, he authored a pamphlet to stir Catholic interests in the cause. In it, Brouillet claimed Protestant agents restricted the Indians' right to choose a religion, and if action was not taken, that might become the general state of things. He suggested that the Catholic press take a unified stand and encouraged the Catholic population to use the ballot box to affect desired changes. He also called for donations to enable the BCIM to continue its work. From Oregon, Brouillet traveled to California to raise additional funds. He eventually arrived in Washington, D.C., by June 1875.²⁰

As is evident by Brouillet's efforts on his return trip, financing the operations of the Bureau was a chronic difficulty. Such was the financial straits under which the BCIM operated that Ewing never took a penny in salary during his years as Commissioner. He appealed to wealthy Catholics, Catholic organizations and to the church hierarchy but received a mere trickle of financial support. Upon his return to Washington, Brouillet assumed the fund-raising duties of the Bureau. Although he continued pressing Catholic bishops for financial help, Brouillet was determined to expand the Bureau's potential base of support by tapping into the general public. His first step was to help organize the Ladies' Catholic Indian Missionary Association, an auxiliary to the BCIM designed to solicit funds. He also urged Catholic school children to make small donations to help the Indian missions. Lastly, to increase awareness of the needs of Indian missions and to raise much-needed

¹⁶Ibid., 97-99; Thomas, "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet," 83-91.

¹⁷Ewing to A.M.A. Blanchet, Bishop of Nesqually, January 22, 1874, BCIM, Series 1-1, Box 2, folder 16.

¹⁸A.M.A. Blanchet to Charles Ewing, February 25, 1874, BCIM, Series 1-1, Box 2, folder 16.

¹⁹Thomas, "Abbe Jean-Baptiste Abraham Brouillet," 91-96; Rahill, *Catholic Indian Missions*, 135-140.

²⁰Rahill, *Catholic Indian Missions*, 140-44.

revenue, Brouillet had Father Jean F. Malo tour the East and give a series of lectures. In recognition of these efforts, Archbishop Bayley appointed Brouillet treasurer on June 1, 1876. Despite his labors, funding continued to vex the Bureau. The Ladies' Association generated over \$6,000 in one year, but Brouillet's other endeavors fared poorly.²¹

In November 1878, Brouillet left for Europe to secure a papal endorsement for the BCIM. The trip served a two-fold purpose. First of all, papal approval would stem assaults from within the Catholic community. A number of missionaries had become disenchanted with the meager financial support which the Bureau provided. Their grievances were given ample publicity by James McMaster, editor of the New York *Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*. McMaster, too, believed the BCIM achieved little good; thus he mounted an editorial campaign to do away with the Bureau. To forestall further attacks, Brouillet traveled to Rome to garner Pope Leo XIII's blessing. Brouillet also hoped that papal sanction would inspire American Catholics and arouse increased support for the Bureau's work. He made his case for the BCIM in an audience with the pontiff on January 15, 1879. Finally in June, Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, Prefect of the Congregation of the Propaganda, formally approved the BCIM. The Cardinal beseeched all bishops in the United States to support the Bureau. With the BCIM on a much firmer foundation, Brouillet returned to Washington, D.C. in November.²²

Aside from these duties, Brouillet and Ewing invested a great deal of time and energy in addressing the inequitable distribution of the Indian agencies. They were, however, unable to overcome the anti-Catholic bias rampant within the Indian Department. Government officials even took steps to prevent Catholic missionaries from ministering to Catholic Indians on reservations assigned to other denominations. Brouillet, Ewing and several Catholic bishops protested to the government that this policy not only ignored the wishes of thousands of Catholic Indians but also violated their right to practice their chosen faith. The protests fell on deaf ears. The Indian Department rescinded the order in 1881 only after Protestant missionaries were removed from Catholic agencies and their missionary organizations complained to the government.²³

Unable to gain access to Protestant reservations, Brouillet worked to increase the Catholic presence in the Church's assigned agencies. The vehicle for this increased presence was education. Whites had long believed education was the best means to "civilize" Native Americans. Beginning in the 1860s, the government contracted with religious denominations to educate Indian children and also to teach them how to be good farmers or housewives. Brouillet was the first to arrange contract schools with the government. In 1873, there were three Catholic boarding schools which received \$7,100 from the government. All three were located in the Northwest, and all three were established through Brouillet's influence. Through a combination of tact and perseverance, Brouillet successfully expanded the number of Catholic contract schools. By 1883, the Church conducted eighteen boarding schools with government support amounting to \$54,000. This was Brouillet's greatest legacy.²⁴

Ironically, it was Brouillet's work with a particular contract school that eventually caused his death. One of Brouillet's most prized projects was the Boy's Industrial School in the Devil's Lake Agency, Dakota Territory. The management of the school, however, caused Brouillet and Bishop

²¹Ibid., 121-31, 154-59, 176.

²²Ibid., 172-216.

²³Ibid., 274-307.

²⁴Ibid., 329; *The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions. The Work of the Decade, Ending December 31, 1883*, BCIM, Series 4/2, Box 1, folder 1, p. 13-14.

Martin Marty a great deal of distress. Bishop Marty characterized the school superintendent as a man with talent and an aptitude for languages, but one who lacked the necessary "zeal and piety" and who occasionally "indulge[d]...in intemperance." Another school employee was a "broken down lawyer, who likes to read novels and to drink whiskey at night in his bed."²⁵ Brouillet felt the situation was so bad that it required his personal attention. In October 1882, Brouillet made his way to the Devil's Lake Agency for a three-month stay.

During this time, a severe blizzard stormed across the plains, forcing Brouillet to delay a trip to Fargo where he had an important meeting. He waited three days, vainly hoping the storm would subside. He finally set out, but the driving snow forced him to seek shelter in an old cabin. The blizzard was so fierce that Brouillet could not leave the cabin for a week. Temperatures plunged to forty-five degrees below zero, and several people in the surrounding area froze to death. Brouillet survived, but he was stricken with snow blindness. He lost the use of his left eye completely. His right eye was damaged as well. Brouillet's health deteriorated rapidly, and he was hospitalized for a time. In his absence, Charles Ewing shouldered the bulk of the duties at the Bureau. The strain may have precipitated Ewing's demise. He fell ill in June 1883 but never recovered. He died on June 20, only forty-eight years old. By this time, Brouillet's health had improved enough that he could continue his duties as director. Over the winter, however, his condition grew worse, and he died on February 5, 1884.²⁶

More than any other individual, Father Brouillet established a solid footing upon which the BCIM would stand and grow. Many years after Brouillet's death, Charles Lusk, the BCIM's long-time secretary, wrote that there may have been abler men in the Bureau, but "no one...excelled him in single-hearted, unselfish devotion to his work....He was a most lovable character, full of the milk of human kindness, and was the nearest approach to a saint of any man I have known."²⁷

²⁵Bishop Martin Marty to Brouillet, August 22, 188-, BCIM, Series 1-1, Box 3, folder 11.

²⁶Rahill, *Catholic Indian Missions*, 332-34; Brouillet to Bishop Marty, March 15, 1883, BCIM, Series 1-1, Box 5, folder 4.

²⁷Charles S. Lusk, "A Retrospect of Fifty Years," *The Indian Sentinel* [hereafter cited as *TIS*] 4 (January 1924): 4.